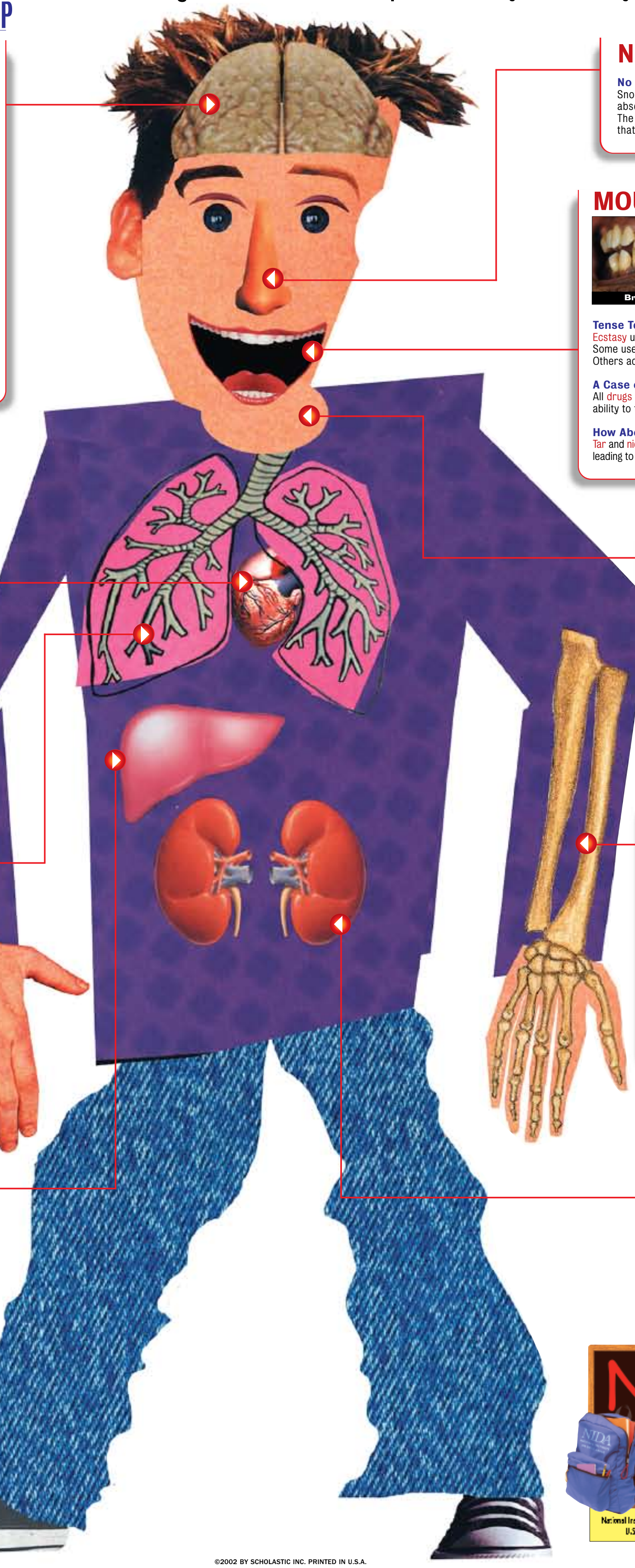
HEADS UP
REAL NEWS ABOUT DRUGS AND YOUR BODY
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Drugs and the Body—It Isn't Pretty

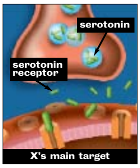
Nicotine. Heroin. Cocaine. Marijuana. Inhalants. Methamphetamine. Steroids. They all cause damage. Check out this diagram to find out how each part of the body is affected by drugs of abuse.



BRAIN

Honey, I Shrunk My Brain!
Inhalants can actually shrink the part of the brain that controls body movements.

Tired and Moody
A chemical called serotonin helps you stay in a good mood and get enough sleep. Ecstasy messes with the serotonin in your brain.



X's main target

Bye-bye, Brain Cells!
Methamphetamine use can damage a large number of brain cells in the limbic system (or emotional brain).

Super Slow
Messages speed from your brain to your muscles at more than 200 miles per hour. Inhalants can put the brakes on quick communication.

The Next Step?
A working short-term memory is required for learning and performing tasks that call for more than one or two steps. Marijuana can impair short-term memory.

HEART

Body Blocking
Steroid use can lead to blocked blood flow to the heart or brain. The result: a stroke or a heart attack.

Fit as a ...
Even very fit athletes can have a heart attack if they abuse cocaine or methamphetamine.

'N Sync
Inhalants can disrupt normal heart rhythms, which can cause a heart attack.

LUNGS

Sticky Black Tar
Need we say more? It coats the lungs of tobacco and marijuana smokers.


BEFORE Healthy Lung — AFTER Smoker's Lung

Poisoned
When an abuser sniffs inhalants, the toxic gas can replace oxygen in the lungs. Without oxygen, the brain and body suffocate and die.

LIVER

Risky Rupture
Steroid abuse has been associated with liver tumors and blood-filled cysts. Both the tumors and the cysts can rupture, causing internal bleeding.

IMMUNE SYSTEM

Sharing More Than Needles
Drug abusers who share non-sterile injection equipment are at risk for contracting HIV, Hepatitis B and C, and other infectious diseases.

NOSE

No More Nostrils
Snorting cocaine can create pimple-like abscesses that can turn into raw holes. The holes can eat away the cartilage that divides the nose.

MOUTH


Brush much?

Not a Good Look
Cigarette smoke discolors teeth. Smoking can also lead to gum disease and lost teeth.

Tense Teeth
Ecstasy use causes involuntary teeth clenching. Some users need to wear dental mouth guards. Others actually use pacifiers.

A Case of the Blahs
All drugs of abuse can make users lose the ability to feel normal happiness and pleasure.

How About a Mint?
Tar and nicotine build up on the teeth and tongue, leading to bad breath.

SKIN

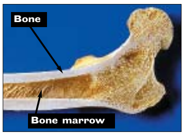
Pizza Face
Steroids can cause acne pimples to pop up all over the face of a user.


Up close and pimpley

BONES

Forget About the NBA
Steroid use can keep bones from growing. Abusers may never reach their full, adult height.

Down in My Bones
Inhalants damage the marrow inside of bones.



KIDNEYS

Boiling Over
Ecstasy users risk kidney failure when their body temperature soars and they become dehydrated.

NIDA goes back to school
Science-based drug abuse education
National Institute on Drug Abuse • National Institutes of Health
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

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